St. Charles Borromeo Library
Catholic University

THE Commonweal

Bertram M. Beck

AFTER NEWBURGH, WHAT?

The Role of Welfare

Gunnar D. Kumlien

THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

Samuel Hynes

A SMALL LITERARY MONUMENT

The Cuban Decision: An Editorial • *Poetic Imagery* • *Through a Stranger's Eyes* • *The Collector's Art* • *Neither-Heaven-Nor-Hell*

VOLUME LXXVII, NO. 7 NOVEMBER 9, 1962 TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Variety and Focus

The Commonweal is a literary journal, a political journal, a religious journal. It has even been said it is all things to all men. Though an exaggeration, there is some point to this comment. The Commonweal does aim at variety and diversity. At the same time, it aims to focus sharply on those issues which concern thoughtful men.

In the weeks ahead, The Commonweal's variety will be particularly evident in articles by: Peter Hunter on the *Soviet threat to the Common Market,* Amalia Elguera on *Teresa of Avila,* John T. Noonan, Jr. on the *responsibilities of the college,* Thomas Weyr on *the Church in Prague,* and by Illtud Evans on *Jerusalem, city of peace.*

In its editorial pages The Commonweal will direct its attention to those events that, week by week, shape the world in which we live. In their weekly theater and movie criticism, Richard Gilman and Philip T. Hartung will focus their gaze on significant creations of stage and screen. All in all, variety and focus.

--------- 17 Issues for $2 ---------

SPECIAL TRIAL OFFER
FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS

THE COMMONWEAL
232 Madison Ave., New York 16, N.Y.

Enclosed is $2. Send The Commonweal for the next 17 weeks to:

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ **ZONE** _____ **STATE** _____

11/9/62

THIS WEEK

EDITORIALS

163 The Cuban Decision
164 U.S. on Apartheid
165 France's Referendum
165 Shift in India

ARTICLES, FEATURES

166 Catholics and Controversy
by James O'Gara
167 After Newburgh, What?
by Bertram M. Beck
170 The Challenge of Islam
by Gunnar D. Kumlien
172 A Small Literary Monument
by Samuel Hynes

VERSE

174 The Bather
by Nicholas Arcomano

DEPARTMENTS

175 The Stage
by Richard Gilman
176 The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung
177 Correspondence
179 Books
182 Art: The Collector's Art
by Betty Kaufman

THE COMMONWEAL
232 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N.Y.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN, *Editor*
JAMES O'GARA, *Managing Editor*
DANIEL CALLAHAN, *Associate Editor*
WALTER ARNOLD, JR., *Assistant Editor*

RICHARD GILMAN, *Drama Critic*
PHILIP T. HARTUNG, *Movie Critic*
ROBERT BARRAT, *Paris*
GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN, *Rome*
MICHAEL P. FOGARTY, *Great Britain*

JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager*

Second-class postage paid at Norwalk, Conn. Printed in the U.S.A. and published weekly, except biweekly from mid-July to mid-September, at 116 Main St., Norwalk, Conn., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 232 Madison Ave., New York 16, N.Y. MUrray Hill 3-2042.

Copyright © 1962 The Commonweal Publishing Co., INC.

U.S. and Canada, $8 a year. Foreign, $1[illegible] Single copies 25¢.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

The Cuban Decision

NO ONE, it seems certain, is likely to forget Sunday, October 28, 1962. With the announcement on that day by Premier Khrushchev that the Soviet Union would remove its missiles from Cuba the world heaved a huge sigh of relief. The reaction was understandable. The week preceding the announcement had been a terrible one. However much could be said in favor of President Kennedy's firm and unswerving stand, the very real threat of a nuclear war was enough to dampen most people's enthusiasm for a face-to-face confrontation with the Soviet Union.

But, joyfully, there was no nuclear war; there was not even a limited war with conventional weapons. There was only a massive display of American muscle-flexing and an astounding Soviet decision to back off rapidly and peacefully. For once, it seemed, a deadly cold war clash came off clearly in favor of the United States and just as clearly in favor of peace. The latter result has been, in the cold war, even rarer than the former; and we have learned that the two things do not necessarily go together.

The most obvious explanation for the surprising turn of events is that the President's decision to risk a nuclear war with the Soviet Union was a brilliant and successful gamble. Not only did the President serve full notice on Premier Khrushchev that American patience had run out, he also made it perfectly clear that the United States was not at all prone to rationalize away the rapid build-up of Soviet missile strength in Cuba simply in order to avoid an international crisis.

If the U.S. had not made precisely clear, prior to that build-up, just what it would consider aggressive action, its response to the installation of missile sites did. The fact that the Soviet Union did not continue to argue its claim that its help to Cuba was merely defensive served also to vindicate the President's reading of the meaning of that build-up.

Let it be said here that The Commonweal, in our editorial earlier in October, misjudged the situation. We held, at that time, that either an invasion of Cuba or a naval blockade of Cuba would have been a mistake. At that time, however, there was no hard intelligence data on the Soviet missile site preparations. But once such data was made known it became obvious that a new evaluation was necessary immediately.

Whether Premier Khrushchev's key intention was to prepare the way for blackmail over Berlin or simply to shift the balance of power in the Western Hemisphere is still not clear. But it can hardly be doubted that the Soviet activity posed a clear and present danger which had to be met promptly and firmly.

AT THIS WRITING, then, the President's move has all the marks of a great triumph. It did not, as many, including ourselves, thought it might, alienate the Latin American nations. On the contrary, it served to elicit a unity of purpose which has not been seen since the end of World War II. Nor has it—so far—led to Soviet counter-moves in other parts of the world. In all respects, it appears to have been the most successful, the least costly, and the most effective instance of American leadership witnessed in many years.

Yet many dangers remain and it would be naive to minimize them. In the short run, it is not unlikely that the Soviet Union will attempt some move which will enable them to regain the initiative and erase the memory of their humiliating withdrawal from Cuba. The most likely place for such a move would naturally seem to be Berlin. In addition, it is possible that Fidel Castro may attempt some move to regain his lost prestige and to assert his independence of the unilateral Soviet decision. All told, it still remains hard to believe that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Soviet Union will not try, perhaps desperately, to recoup its loss.

The long-run dangers are no less real. Not the least of these dangers is that the American success will generate a number of myths about the ideal direction of American foreign policy. The first myth is already sweeping the land: that the infallible way to combat Soviet imperialism is by military might and nuclear threat. Yet it would be disastrous if this myth gained credence on the basis of the Cuban affair. That the Soviets backed down in the Caribbean, where they are at a strategic disadvantage, hardly proves they will back down under all circumstances. A belief that America can always "call Russian bluffs" could well prove a dangerous one.

A second myth would be that the tide of Communism has now been turned in Latin America. As yet, there is little to suggest that such is likely to be the case. For the main source of potential Communist success in Latin America lies in the very real lack of economic and social justice among the working masses. As long as injustice and inequity are widespread, Communism is bound to have some appeal. A mere stiffening of the hemispheric military posture is hardly likely to make that appeal ineffective.

A third myth would be that the President's action indubitably shows the superiority of forceful unilateral action over the slower methods of negotiation and recourse to world opinion. In support of this myth, it could with some plausibility be argued that prior American recourse to U.N. or O.A.S. approval would have meant a dangerous delay in putting a halt to Soviet missile site construction in Cuba. But at the same time there is no certainty that a like unilateral move would be viable in other cases. More important still, the United States has been a leader in support of the ideal that disputing nations submit their views to international arbitration, that the U.N. be the means by which world peace is facilitated, and that no single nation has the right to make decisions on its own which involve the security and welfare of all other nations.

The Cuban blockade and President Kennedy's uncompromising stand on removal of Soviet missiles have had many good effects. But these good effects could all be nullified by drawing from them the wrong conclusions. There are more ways than one that our victory could turn bitter in our mouth. It is, in this respect, important to recall that Pope John XXIII's plea to the world was not for an American victory. It was that all men dedicate themselves to peace, that leaders sit down and negotiate with one another for an honorable settlement of their differences. The Pope's approach remains valid.

U.S. on Apartheid

IT WAS startling to find an American delegate, Francis T. P. Plimpton, urging the U.N. to pass a resolution condemning *apartheid* in the Union of South Africa. Press excerpts from his remarks to the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly were very brief. What there was did include Mr. Plimpton's intense regret that racial discrimination still persists here, particularly as he could see no basis for inequality of race either in man's highest ethical teachings, or the findings of modern science. It was good to have this presentation in such basic terms.

But by what right can this country call for the condemnation of another for failings of which we ourselves are guilty? Discrimination against the American Negro is no regional problem. North and South, East and West, in kinds and tenure of jobs, places of residence, and admission to schools, labor unions and the professions, the Negro finds himself at a decided disadvantage. The condition is so widespread that it is hard to accept as adequate Mr. Plimpton's reference to "pockets" in this country where racial discrimination "still lingers."

His fundamental point about the law of this land and the efforts the federal government is making to end discrimination cannot, however, be gainsaid. Since 1954, the United States Supreme Court with its decisions and subsequent rulings, and the lower courts in their handling of various cases, have consistently sustained the American democratic principle of the equality of the races. Both the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations have likewise upheld this principle, even though both have suffered deserved criticism for their inaction. The justification, then, for Mr. Plimpton's attack on *apartheid* is that his proposal is not inconsistent with the official policies of our government.

Moreover, progress toward racial justice is clearly observable over here. A recent C.B.S. TV "Report" on four Southern cities that had not long ago been very prominent in the headlines because of racial tensions and disturbances showed how much headway is now being made. In Clinton, Tenn., Norfolk, Va., Atlanta, Ga. and Little Rock, Ark., integration in the local schools is still only on a token basis, but already it has effected changes in attitudes. The students, teachers and local officials who spoke on the program demonstrated that. And the most hopeful note in the recent Mississippi crisis was contributed by Southern political leaders and editors who steadfastly counseled moderation and wholehearted support of the laws of the United States. If America is not yet in a position to criticize others, its official stance and the tangible progress we are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

making assuredly do entitle us to join with others in pushing for racial justice wherever it is denied.

France's Referendum

IT ALL depends upon the way you read the figures. Or, rather, it all depends upon how President de Gaulle chooses to read the figures. For the official tabulation of the October 28 referendum in France shows that roughly sixty-two per cent of the ballots say "yes" to de Gaulle's direct bid to the people for support of his plan for popular election of his eventual successor.

On the other hand, the "yes" vote represents only forty-six per cent of the eligible voters. If the President should choose to interpret this fact as a sign of "vague and doubtful" public confidence in him, then he will make good his threat to resign—and leave France in a perilous turmoil. Yet it is unlikely that he will do this, because, read in another, perfectly valid way, the actual vote represents just under two out of every three in support of de Gaulle. If not a "victory," the referendum was undoubtedly a "success," though it is only another round in the fight between the Parliament and the President, one which will determine the future of France's Republican experiment.

The next round in this fight (it is a moot point just what round it is), and the more decisive one, will come in November's general elections. For in the interim the Opposition parties (practically all of France's parties, except for de Gaulle's own UNR) will have the chance to marshal all their arguments against the powerful Presidency that de Gaulle advocates. Also by that time the Cuban crisis will (hopefully) have abated, and that was generally conceded to have helped de Gaulle's plea.

The Opposition parties' biggest gain may come from the fact that just before the referendum they were able to unite, for the first time, in publishing a common program of policy for a multi-party coalition government. This statement was too late to affect the October 28 vote. But up to now, according to not a few students of French government, it has been chiefly the failure of these parties to unite in a positive program and to present a stable alternative which has given de Gaulle his best argument for quasi-monarchical authority.

With all the exasperations that French political struggles tend to provoke, there should be no mistaking what is chiefly at issue here. It is certainly not the right of the French people to elect their own President directly, instead of through a committee of notables. It is rather in the extended powers which such a vote would be taken to invest in a President, who already can dissolve Parliament or appeal over its head. In short, what is certainly at stake is the political existence of Parliament itself, which is still the heart of the Republic.

As a writer to the New York *Times*, criticizing President de Gaulle's scheme, put it, "the scheme cannot but result in the conversion of a regime already unashamedly authoritarian into at best a benevolent Bonapartism; more likely, however, into full-fledged presidential dictatorship." France's multi-party system still has its seemingly insuperable difficulties, but the united policy-statement of the parties may be expected to gain significant support for it in the coming general elections. As the *Times'* correspondent adds, "parliamentarism—and it need not be the anarchic form of the fourth Republic—[corresponds] to the tradition of France." The rounds to come will tell if de Gaulle—and his successor—are to lose the crown they never had.

Shift in India

WHILE ill-equipped and outnumbered Indian troops fight an impossible war in the treacherous Himalayas, New Delhi itself is witnessing one of the first casualties of the Chinese Communist attack. For everything in the wind there indicates that India's long-cherished "non-alignment" has been mortally wounded.

The failure so far of India's non-aligned friends even to speak on her behalf may be a chief contributory blow. In any case India now may be expected to turn to the West for aid, since no one in authority there expects Russia to come to her aid. As *The Times* of India put it, "The point is not that the Soviet Union has let us down, but that New Delhi had nó business whatsoever to suppose that it would do anything else."

It is important now that the United States be swift and generous with its offer of military aid, even if it is refused (as it well might be, in view of increased British aid, and for reasons of national prestige). It is most important that there be a peaceable solution to the Chinese-Indian war, but short of that the Chinese must either be repulsed or prevented from gaining any further territory.

The shift of India into the Western camp, which appears at least to have begun, would affect incalculably the balance of influence in South East Asia and also in Africa. It is tragic indeed that India has to suffer the "shock of recognition" under such awful circumstances. The hope is that with the strength of the Western Alliance behind India, China may shortly be dissuaded from her perilous course.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Catholics and Controversy

A COUPLE of weeks ago I served as lead-off speaker for a day-long alumni symposium sponsored by the School of Education at Fordham University. The theme of the affair was "Catholics and Controversy," and the topic seemed to me an eminently appropriate one at this point in our history.

Many Protestant writers have referred to the period we are now entering as the "post-Protestant" period in American life. To me what seems to be happening is simply that Catholics are at last emerging from immigrant status to play a more full and active part in our society. For the children and grandchildren of millions of Catholic immigrants, as for the children and grandchildren of non-Catholic immigrants, the American dream has come true—a fact symbolized, of course, by the presence in the White House of the first American Catholic President.

Obviously, some Protestants find this state of affairs hard to take. I don't think they should, however. The emergence of Catholics on the national scene does not represent a "victory" for Catholicism and a setback for Protestantism; it is, rather, a victory for the American idea, one at which Protestants, Catholics and Jews alike should rejoice.

Protestants have not lost their power; they are being called on to share it. This new state of affairs raises problems of its own, for Protestants as well as Catholics, as my colleague Daniel Callahan points out in the November *Harper's*. In such a situation, controversy and a certain amount of tension are inevitable; indeed, I would say they are positively healthy.

In my opinion, Catholics should not be afraid of controversy; I do think, however, that we should be quite concerned about the subjects on which we enter into public debate. In the normal democratic process, it is perfectly proper for any group to look out for its own self-interest. If the group is our own, we consider its activities a good example of popular, grass-roots political activity; if the group represents the opposition, we call it a pressure group. In either event, such activity is part of the normal democratic process.

The Church is much more than just another interest group, however, and I think we can never afford to forget this fact. It is easy enough to get Catholics stirred up when what they see as "Catholic interests" in a narrow, institutional sense are involved; the federal aid question is a good example. But it is often painfully hard to get Catholics interested in other and perhaps more basic questions.

Take the race question, for example. Most people know the stand taken by the Bishops on federal aid. But until the recent dramatic moves by Archbishops Rummel and Cody in New Orleans, how many non-Catholic Americans realized the depth and gravity of Catholic opposition to racism and segregation? For that matter, how many Catholic Americans knew how strongly the Bishops had spoken against segregation?

Or take the area of international affairs. The modern Popes have long stressed international social justice and the duty of the affluent nations to the have-not countries. Yet how well known is this fact, particularly in view of the chorus of Catholic voices that for years bemoaned "bleeding hearts" and "do-gooders" in connection with foreign aid programs?

By now everyone in the country must know that Catholics are opposed to indecent movies; we have made no bones about our position, and this is fair enough. But has Catholic concern about the use of just means in modern war come through half as clearly, even at the risk of public controversy?

These are random examples, but I think my point is clear. Catholic commitment to social justice and charity, our concern for the common good, is far larger than mere institutional self-interest. It is of crucial importance that we demonstrate this fact.

Of equal importance, I think, is the manner in which we carry on such disputes as do arise. Indeed, this aspect of the question, the mode of debate, is frequently of more importance than the substance of the argument itself.

The heart of the democratic process is dialogue—civilized discourse. We should never give the impression that we are unwilling to enter into reasonable argument with our neighbors. We should avoid the *ad hominem* argument; we should beware of ascribing bad motives. Most matters of public controversy involve a complex set of facts and delicate prudential judgment; we should steer clear of assuming that all the right inevitably and always is on our side of the argument.

Again the question of federal aid to parochial schools is a good example. No matter how strongly Catholics feel on this issue, plain common sense would indicate that any issue on which public figures and constitutional experts are so divided is far from simple. There are bigots in the world, heaven knows, but it is a grave mistake on this and other issues to label all our opposition in this way.

Given proper attention to both matter and manner, I see no reason at all for Catholics to be shy of entering into public controversy. Up to now we have not been participating in civic and social affairs to an extent even reasonably proportionate to our importance in the population. As far as I am concerned, the sooner we begin, the better.

JAMES O'GARA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Role of Welfare

After Newburgh, What?

BERTRAM M. BECK

IN RECENT months, stimulated by the situation in Newburgh, there has been an unprecedented debate on developments in the public assistance program. Every public welfare director now realizes that his program is potentially explosive: any political blocs seeking a "cause" can easily find one by simply attacking the public assistance program, particularly the relief recipient.

At bottom, there is a basic hostility by those of us who work for a living toward those who appear to get something for nothing. We are all too ready to believe the stories of cheats and chiselers. Most particularly, we are offended by the idea that through our taxes we are feeding the worthy and unworthy, the good and the bad, the lazy and the industrious. No matter how meager the grant or how engulfing or demanding the red tape, it is not meager or demanding *enough* for us —for the idea of seeming to *reward* indolence at the expense of thrift strikes deep and stirs strong feelings. Obviously it costs us something to be thrifty, industrious and reasonably sober and we may find it hard to keep our noses to the grindstone if others are surviving without these virtues.

In short, it appears that the hidden envy of a life of apparent sloth stirs our antagonism to the public assistance client and gives rise to righteous indignation. But contrast that attitude with our attitude toward either the slothful or immoral relief recipient, or the slothful and immoral recipient of unemployment compensation, or even the slothful or immoral rich. By and large few questions are raised concerning the two latter categories: the rich are rich and the recipient of unemployment compensation is living on money accumulated as a consequence of his own frugality. Yet, for his part, the public assistance recipient incites our indignation in two ways: he does not behave as we think he should and he lives on the pittance provided through our taxes. The source of the anger, then, is not just his conduct or his status as a relief recipient, but the combination. Essentially, we say, "My money is being used to reward bad behavior. I work for a living even though I'd rather stay in bed. He does what I'd like to do and my money is used to reward him."

The roots of this attitude are deep and account in part for the recurring nature of the public welfare scandal. In particular, it is worth recalling that the English Poor Law, the basis of our public assistance legislation, differentiated between "worthy" and "unworthy" poor. Thus the desire to punish the "unworthy" could be satisfied. In our Social Security Act the differentiation was obscured, but our sense of the difference has persisted.

NEWBURGH, for instance, differed only in degree from past assaults on public assistance. The origin of the antagonism was the same as ever, but the difference in degree was and is important. For this time the allegations that the unworthy were receiving our money fell upon a fertile field, that of the rabid right. Those who saw President Eisenhower as a Communist easily saw Mr. Mitchell as a hero. To the partisans of public welfare, the significance of this misalliance was its underlining of the difference in basic values held between the pro- and anti-public welfare groups. It was no longer merely a question of arguing whether relief recipients did or did not cheat. It was, rather, a difference in fundamental viewpoints of the nature of man and his potential.

Nevertheless, despite the strength of Mr. Mitchell's supporters, the Newburgh battle was won by the supporters of public welfare. For social workers and the friends of social work it was a great victory. Where is the evidence of this victory? Primarily, it is in the press. Even the most vicious articles come—after a trail of slander—to the conclusion which is the social worker's conclusion: what is needed is rehabilitation, trained social workers, casework. The politicians who courted Mr. Mitchell at the start of his meteoric rise dropped him. He was censured by the city manager's association. Moreover, the Secretary of D.H.E.W. appointed a committee to advise him. And that committee has been composed of social workers who, to no one's surprise, recommend rehabilitation. The Secretary himself speaks and echoes their recommendations. Finally, the President sent a special welfare message to Congress. Today, largely as a consequence of Newburgh, Congress has enacted a most progressive public welfare measure. It provides funds and encouragement for the development of social work services.

But how was the Newburgh battle won, and how se-

BERTRAM M. BECK is himself a professional in the field of social work. This is his first appearance in The Commonweal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cure is the victory? Ironically, the source of the success lies in the degree to which friends of public welfare have accommodated themselves to the basic premise of the enemy. Essentially, the enemy of public welfare says there is something wrong with people on relief—dependence on public charity is a weakness, an immoral act. By implication, the public welfare partisan agrees that there is, generally, something wrong with the relief recipient. He requires rehabilitation. Give him more properly prepared social workers and the trained social workers will treat those on relief—often with the implication that they will render the relief recipients independent.

The social welfare partisans disagree with the extreme critics who hold that the relief recipient's dependency is an act of sheer cussedness, but many critics could agree with the partisans on the need for rehabilitation. That is why *Look* could carry an article replete with misstatements and exaggerations, and still conclude that more trained social workers would clean up "the welfare mess." This happy accommodation of the critics' and partisans' viewpoints was never clearer than in the discussion of children born out-of-wedlock in ADC families. The critics said we are subsidizing immorality. The public welfare partisans said more trained case-workers are needed as the answer to the problem of illegitimacy. Few stood firm on the propriety of our affluent society's giving support to children and mothers, regardless of the mother's sex life.

The Battle of Newburgh, then, was won by the partisans by accepting the basic premise that there is something wrong with relief recipients. The new popularity of the term "rehabilitation" in public welfare is significant. It suggests that the welfare client is debilitated. The social worker will rehabilitate. Suppose this fails? One hears little any more of the right to assistance regardless of the recipient's personal habits.

What is the significance of this shift in emphasis? Has the relief recipient been sold out to win this battle? To a great extent the shift in emphasis reflects a shift in times. During the depression, when our federal-state system of public assistance was born, many people required assistance for economic reasons alone. Even then, though, they were under attack. Yet the public assistance system could be viewed as a form of social insurance supported by all for the many who fell on hard times and could prove their eligibility. This, of course, did not still the critics of the "unworthy" poor, but the argument found favor among working people. Social service in public assistance was not expected to rehabilitate the client but to administer the program in a humane, constructive fashion, preserving self-esteem wherever possible.

Since World War II all of this has changed. The growth of social insurances and the economy have left only a few families with solely economic problems on public assistance. For the most part, the families receiving public assistance today are beset by a variety of problems. In many respects they are defeated families unable to share in the American dream of material growth and development. Obviously they need help, but public assistance alone would not be the answer. In one sense, then, partisans of public assistance are not selling out to the enemy when they place their emphasis on rehabilitation rather than on the right to assistance. Times have changed; it is now possible to agree that most families on public assistance are not merely victims of economic hazards. For complex reasons, they are simply incapable of participating in the economy.

THE DIAGNOSIS is, therefore, correct; but thus far the plan of treatment is limited. It may boomerang for, as has already been suggested, the problems of the public assistance family will not necessarily yield to a problem-by-problem approach. In vocational rehabilitation, the rehabilitated earns his living again. Yet there is here a disturbing implication that, if social workers are going to work with these families, then the families will eventually earn their own living. Remember that at the seat of the criticism is the antagonism against the "free-loader." Here social welfare partisans may not succeed. Unless they are clearer about the nature of the problem and its solutions, they may leave in the wake of their victory disillusion and disappointment.

After all, at the root of the problem of many of these families is racial discrimination, and this won't be cured by casework. Of course, families thus victimized can be helped. But unless social workers address themselves to the essential problem of a segregated society, new victims will take the place of those restored to health. In a similar fashion, illegitimate pregnancy occurs most frequently among groups that have suffered social exclusion. They have not been fully incorporated into their society nor have they assimilated the values of the larger society. The social worker may help a particular mother to change her behavior, but unless there is a fundamental social work approach to the basic problem a new wound will appear in place of the one cured.

Many young people in public assistance families are in the group defined recently by James B. Conant in *Slums and Suburbs*. Conant describes the educational deprivation of these youngsters, put on a job market that has no place for them. These are the mothers and fathers of tomorrow's relief children. This social dynamite is not diffused by casework treatment of the family being assisted. Only a basic program of educational and work opportunities can make the American dream a reality for these slum children. Thus, while public assistance families have problems, it is deceptive to imply that their solution can be had by adding professional social workers to public assistance programs

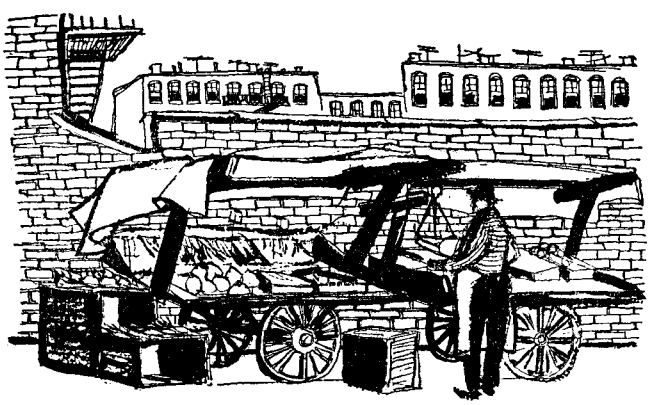
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Such social workers are needed, but they must have the reinforcement of basic social planning for a total approach to the fundamental social problems. Social work has much to offer in such an attack and friends of social work need to understand that casework is not synonymous with social work. The individual by individual approach is by no means the only or the most promising approach in the social worker's kit.

Looking again at families on public assistance, social workers need to beware of stressing service at the expense of bread. The right to assistance still exists and these programs have been established for the hungry and poor. There is no substitute for money and the foundation of any public assistance program must be a basic level of economic support, commensurate with minimum health and decency. It is doubtful that any program reaches this standard. Because of our hate-envy of the relief recipient, we force him to degrade himself to secure so-called relief. Every asset must be liquidated. Every shred of self-respect forfeited. Once on relief, the recipient must prove and re-prove his eligibility. If he starts to climb out of the morass, he is pulled back by having taken from his pittance an amount equivalent to what he earns. It is absurd under such conditions to try to recruit and retrain professional social workers to make amends.

COMPLAINTS are heard because families receive public assistance generation after generation. But the foundation for this is laid by policies designed to demoralize and downgrade the family that applies for public charity. The public assistance client can't eat social work services. A program to render such services must rest on a program of financial help that provides minimal creature comforts and a sense of human dignity. Underlying a national standard of service is the need for a minimal national standard of health and decency which every state should provide. The problem is that many persons who can accept a national standard of services, because it fits into their concept of dependency as a disease to be cured, cannot accept a national minimum budget, because it does not fit into their need to punish the relief client.

When the basic assistance reaches a minimum of adequacy and when the legislators and the public allow for human administration, then it is possible for the social worker, prepared for the task, to help many public assistance clients to live richer and more productive lives. Proper preparation for such a social worker means at least a master's degree from an accredited school of social work. Yet there is no possibility of filling all public assistance posts with such social workers. There must, therefore, be discrimination between which workers do what and to whom. At the present time, workers with graduate degrees work side by side with untrained workers. Often there is no essential difference in the tasks assigned them—but a great difference in their capacities.



To clarify the situation for the taxpaying public the title "social worker" needs to be reserved for those workers with proper educational preparation. Social workers also need to develop diagnostic understanding of public assistance families when they are accepted for assistance. On the basis of their diagnostic understanding, social workers need to group families according to their ability to benefit from social work service. Those who cannot use or do not need social work treatment should not be assigned to the fully qualified social worker, but to associate social workers who are capable of determining financial assistance in an intelligent, humane, and constructive manner. If it is not possible to have all the social workers required, expectations should not be placed on the untrained worker that are unfair or frustrating. Rather, public welfare administrators should say to both client and public that, while the help of the qualified social worker is needed for certain families, it is not available and an associate social worker will administer economic assistance which in and of itself will produce no change in family values and behavior. This position would clarify and curtail the tendency to expect civil service employees to perform the most difficult of tasks, without preparation, merely because they have a job title of social worker.

TO RECRUIT qualified social workers to fill some of these posts, conditions must prevail which enable them to practice at a high professional level. Salaries must be substantial enough to attract and hold qualified men in direct service positions. Recent studies of turnover in social work personnel reveal that the agencies which employ women predominantly must expect an annual turnover rate of 20-25 per cent merely through marriage and pregnancy. This means that qualified men must be brought and held in these assistance jobs. To do this they must be enabled to fulfill normal family responsibilities. Salaries must be at least within hailing distance of the regular job market. In 1961 the average starting salary for college graduates was $6,300; technical positions averaged $6,552; non-technical, $5,424. Obviously, salaries for graduate social workers must begin at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

least $6,000 to recruit and hold personnel in the social work field.

Even if such personnel are recruited and held in public assistance work, people should not be misled into thinking that trained social workers will "cure" the problem of public assistance. The roots of poverty and its allied symptoms of separation cannot be tackled on a family-by-family basis. If the motivating value of the supporters of former Secretary Ribicoff's recommendations is the desire to save money by cutting relief rolls, they will be disappointed. If money is valued more than people the problem of public assistance clients will not be solved; neither will the social problems that lead to economic dependency.

In fact, unless we assume that the development of each human to the utmost of his capacity is the primary goal, our world may be doomed to destruction. This was and is the importance of the Battle of Newburgh. It was a skirmish in a long war. It revealed that enemies of public assistance clients are usually opposed to all social measures designed to develop the individual to the utmost of his potential. Thus, the friends of public assistance are winning the Battle of Newburgh by dubious means. They are suggesting that people on public assistance are problem-ridden and that qualified social workers can help them rid themselves of their problems and become independent. This argument appeals to those who prize money more than people. It is based on a false value. It fails to stand on the right of feeding the hungry because they are hungry. It will boomerang.

The roots of social problems cannot be affected by casework service for public assistance clients. These clients need social work services for their maximum development as human beings capable of contributing to the evolvement of democracy. If this reduces the relief rolls, fine—but it is by no means assured. Persons who believe in the essential value of each human being must stand up and be counted. They must not yield to the temptation of winning friends for the wrong reason. With clarity on essential values, partisans of social welfare will win fewer friends and fewer battles but they will at least stand a chance of winning the greatest battle—the battle for a world with peace and freedom for all.

The Challenge of Islam

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

DURING THE SEVEN long years that the war of liberation lasted, one region in Algeria differed markedly from the others. Its inhabitants were tougher than in the rest of the country, and their resistance to the French army seemed to be really indomitable, in spite of the fact that the army easily outnumbered the local partisan fighters and had incomparably superior arms.

That was the province of Kabylia, east of Algiers, called by the freedom fighters Wilaya III, or Military Region III. Its inhabitants, the Kabyles, look more like Europeans than the rest of the Algerian population. They often have blue eyes and fair hair. It is said that they are the descendants of the ancient Romans, who once were the masters of this part of Africa. However this may be, the resistance in the Military Region III provoked a particularly violent French repression, with artillery, bombing from the air, burning of the woods, destruction of villages and even the mining of wells.

No partisan fighters in Europe during World War II had to fight in such desperate conditions as the freedom fighters in Kabylia and none were more isolated from the outside world, without even weapons or food parachuted to them from the air. During the terrible crisis which followed the end of the war in Algeria, Military Region III was heard of again, this time for its swift recovery and for the law and order which were rapidly established there in contrast to the rest of the country.

As its inhabitants interested me, I spent several days, on different occasions, with the "general staff" of its partisan army way up in the rugged mountains. They turned out to be a quite impressive lot of military and political chiefs, selected under the truly terrific pressure of the French repression, so that only the hardest, the most courageous and the most intelligent came out on top after the end of the blood-bath. Their authority over their men is undisputed, their discipline is of iron without being brutal and their way of life is Spartan.

Men and officers have the same pay of four dollars a month—I repeat, four dollars a month and four dollars for the wife and every child, if they are married. If anyone of them is caught making undue approaches to

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN is The Commonweal's regular correspondent in Rome.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a woman, he is liable to be shot immediately. Every form of prostitution is banned. (They deeply despise the French army for its elaborate army brothels.) No alcoholic drinks are tolerated either, according to the Koran. Precisely this point involved me one evening in a most interesting discussion on religion with a group of young officers and one army doctor around a table loaded with army pistols, tommy guns and glasses of sour milk—a most tasty and inspiring drink.

I ASKED THEM if they did not realize that Islam as a way of life—and a great part if not the greatest part of Islam is precisely a way of life—would hardly be able to resist the radical modernization and westernization of their country which they so eagerly desired as a result of the war of liberation. Emancipation of the women, for instance, would, as an unavoidable consequence, carry with it the disintegration of the large patriarchal Moslem family; the yearly fasting of a month (during Ramadan) would not be compatible with industrialization, etc.

They quite agreed with me, but at the same time their anxiety was great to save what would be able to survive of their religion in the new age they were now entering. They did not seem to know exactly what could be saved, except that it should be "the best and the lasting." Their attachment to their religion seemed to be general and sincere.

Talking about religion, one of them mentioned casually that he had received his education from the White Fathers, an order localized in Africa which is widespread in Algeria. I started to inquire among the others, and it turned out that quite a surprising number of these tough Moslem mountain warriors were actually educated by the White Fathers and proud of it. None of them had become Christian, but their esteem for the White Fathers seemed to be as solid as a rock.

The following day I had lunch with their military leader, the legendary "Old Man," Mohand Ouldj Hadji, considered to be a very severe commander, but at the same time a father to his soldiers. He entertained me telling about the terrific strain of fighting with only light weapons against artillery, bombers and tanks, and he explained the plight of the badly wounded, who often begged their comrades to kill them, rather than to let them fall into the hands of the French. Experience had taught them that there are ways and means to make even the toughest speak, particularly if he is already weakened by wounds.

The only way out for us, Hadji went on, was to bring these wounded to the White Sisters in the Hospital of the little town of Michelet. Once they were there, they would be safe, even during the most difficult moments of the war, and there they would be cured with love and dedication. Moreover, the White Sisters trained many of their women to be nurses, a fact of the utmost importance now, when there are practically no doctors in the country. And then he went on as if thinking aloud: "I have absolutely to visit the sisters soon in order to express the heartfelt thanks of all my men for what they have done for us. . . ."

DURING the long spell of complete anarchy which followed the independence of Algeria, many Europeans suffered cruelly. If the Algerians had shown a remarkable discipline as long as they were provoked by the OAS terrorists, the period of complete absence of authority was too much for them. They could not resist the temptation, and their revenge was sometimes ghastly.

At that point many Europeans thought that they were completely abandoned. France abstained from reacting, knowing that the overwhelming fear of the Algerians was that the French army would seize the occasion to intervene again. Then a voice was raised in defense of the Europeans. It was a loud voice and a European one, the voice of Archbishop Etienne Duval, nicknamed by the OAS terrorists "Archbishop Mohammed" for his courageous resistance to the OAS.

Now the Archbishop defended the Europeans, even those who had once sympathized with the OAS. He not only raised his voice, but even opened convents and other religious institutions for those who felt that they were particularly threatened. To the great amazement of many, the voice of the Archbishop was more respected by the Moslems than it had been by the Christians when he fought the OAS.

In Rome, in the meantime, the Algerian representatives are now curious about what happens to their country in the Vatican. They know that the Pope himself has repeatedly backed up "Archbishop Mohammed" in particularly difficult moments. They are well aware of the persistent rumours that "their" Archbishop may be included in the last little group of Cardinals named *in pectore*, and it would undoubtedly make them very proud. And they are well informed, too, about the fact that the cause of Charles de Foucauld is rapidly approaching its climax of canonization for that saintly man.

In an earlier report I mentioned the magnificent "testimony" of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus (founded by Charles de Foucauld) all over Algeria and the Sahara. I reported the agony and final victory of a little group of hand-picked parish priests fighting the OAS right in the middle of its strongholds. Sure enough, there have also been priests sympathizing with the OAS, but the Algerians looked to the Archbishop and drew their conclusions.

There is no doubt that if all this had been prophesied to the first French priests and Bishops in Algeria, they would probably not have believed that such a disaster could ever come upon their mission developing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itself under the protection of the French army, considered as the instrument of Providence in order to extend Christian civilization. Since then the Church in Algeria has learned a bitter lesson, and this lesson has been given it by Islam.

Practically no converts have been made in Algeria, any more than in all other Moslem countries. Precisely this mysterious passive force has given a sort of spiritual shock to the best among the Catholics on the spot. Humbly they had to realize that here the only thing they could ask for was to try to understand and to be understood. But first they had to ask forgiveness for their pride and ignorance.

Wasn't it perhaps his praying Moslem soldiers who gave the young, brilliant, non-believing French officer, Charles de Foucauld, the first spark which ignited the burning fire that consumed him? What was that mysterious force which made *them* pray and which *he* did not yet feel? The fact of these prayers was precisely the challenge to which the Church has just begun to respond.

Nobody knows what that response will be in the end. The only positive thing so far is that more and more Moslems in Algeria do not see the Church any longer as a mere instrument of imperialism and colonialism, and that more and more Christians do not see the Moslems merely as a bunch of primitive polygamists and veiled women. For the first time both sides look at one another without distortion. And on both sides the surprise is enormous.

A Small Literary Monument

SAMUEL HYNES

DURING HIS fiftieth year, when he was deep in his unsuccessful venture into the theater, Henry James remarked in his notebook that he was soothed, in the midst of his troubles, by the thought of Literature, waiting patiently at the door to be let in again. "I let it in," he wrote, "and the old brave hours come back; I live them over again—I add another little block to the small literary monument that it has been given me to erect." The *small* is, of course, a characteristic Jamesian gesture, a note of ironic modesty in an artist who knew his own genius; *monument* is the operative word. For James was building, and with entire self-consciousness, a timeless literary memorial to his own sensibilities.

The monument has had its hard times, to be sure; during James' lifetime, and in the years immediately after his death, he was criticized and ridiculed for his determined cosmopolitanism, for his narrow range of social subjects, and for his style (the stock jape was that there were three styles—James the First, James the Second, and the Old Pretender). But, like the Albert Memorial, it has survived its days of denigration, and stands today elaborately substantial, entirely individual, and as indestructible as any edifice built by man can be. The Old Pretender sits firmly on his throne, the greatest of American novelists.

The circumstances and limitations of James' life scarcely seem the sort that would produce either a great novelist or an American one. His existence was, as he acknowledged, remarkably free of the "alarms and excursions" of a public, or even an ordinarily involved life. He was a bachelor who avoided emotional entanglements, and who had his love affairs with cities instead of women; a gentleman-artist who knew neither bohemia nor business; an expatriate who lived most of his adult life in Europe, and was ill at ease in his own "provincial" country; a novelist who "lived on manners," and spent an extraordinary amount of his time observing Society in English country houses and Italian villas. And always James was slightly outside the world he lived in, always he was the "eternal outsider," the "observant stranger."

It was, of course, this very fact that provided the peculiar conditions in which his genius flourished. If, as he said, "Art is but a point of view, and genius a way of looking at things," then the position from which the artist does his looking is crucial. James' condition of "outsideness" made it possible for him to observe with incomparable precision and sensitivity the manners, and the moral meanings of manners, in the world he saw. His observations of manners made him a supremely social novelist; but his concern with the moral meanings of his observations made him more—made him one of the great moralists. "Experience, as I see it," he wrote, "is our apprehension and our measure of what happens to us as social creatures." The measure, for James, was a moral one.

SAMUEL HYNES, a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, is a member of the faculty at Swarthmore.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If a concern for "what happens to us as social creatures" is one of the coordinates of James' life, a concern for the art of the novel is the other. More than anyone else writing in English, James is responsible for the present status of the novel as an art form comparable in importance and range to poetry, or music or painting. His letters and essays reflect a life-long effort to persuade his fellow writers to perform their sacred office with sufficient seriousness, and above all to attend to the *art* of fiction. He proclaimed his own intentions early in his career, when he wrote of his still unwritten works: "They are to have less 'brain' than *Middlemarch;* but (I boldly proclaim it) they are to have more *form.*"

TO THIS GREAT maker of the modern novel, Mr. Leon Edel is in the process of erecting still another monument, a biography. *Henry James: The Conquest of London* and *The Middle Years. (Lippincott. $8.50 each.)* so far, which will surely be *the* life of James for the foreseeable future. And *monument* is the right word for this vast undertaking; already, in several volumes, it is longer than any of James' novels, and twenty years of James' life remain to be recorded.

No one who has read the first volume (published in 1953) needs to be told how good a book this is. It is enormously methodical and detailed, but it is also enormously readable. All the facts are offered, but they are not simply dumped on the reader like a load of coal, in the manner of some recent Heavy Biographies. Rather they are arranged by Mr. Edel into an interpretation of James' life as a man and as an artist which strikes me as entirely convincing. Mr. Edel allows himself to speculate on psychological states and human relations, and on the connections between life and art, but he bases his speculations on facts, and his conclusions are moderate and judicious.

One of his quietly impressive achievements is his recreation of the James family and of their curious relations with Henry, the son and brother. Another is his skillful demolition, in volume I, of the theories about James' "obscure hurt." (Mr. Edel argues persuasively that it was nothing more symbolical than a slipped disc.) Still another is his working out, in the later volumes, of James' long, ambiguous intimacy with Constance Fenimore Woolson. In every important respect this is the definitive biography of James, and I cannot imagine the circumstances which would make it obsolete.

The kind of familiarity with James' life which Mr. Edel's book provides makes even more clear the novelist's mode of existence between societies, and the way in which he seemed habitually to place himself among outsiders—with Russians in Paris, with Englishmen in Italy, with Americans in London—as if instinctively seeking a removed position from which to observe that conflict between societies which provided the dramatic matter of his work. *The Princess Casamassima (Scribner's. $12.)* is, in this respect, unique among James' novels. In it the conflict is not between national social patterns, but between classes.

One term of the conflict is, to be sure, a familiar one: high society is represented by the Princess, a character borrowed from an earlier novel, *Roderick Hudson,* where she stands for the corrupt grandeur of decadent European upper-class life. But the other term in the conflict is new: James chose for his hero, not an innocent American this time, but a member of the English working class—Hyacinth Robinson, a poor bookbinder.

Hyacinth is not, to be sure, a typical member of his class; he is the illegitimate son of a French cocotte who murdered her titled English lover. His awareness of his heredity makes him conscious at once of the existence of a splendid life of wealth and culture, and of his total exclusion from it. This sense of disinheritance leads him to join an anarchist conspiracy, and to pledge himself to commit a political assassination when called upon. But before the call comes, he has met the Princess, and has discovered through her the values and pleasures of the other life; he has, as James puts it, fallen in love with the beauty of the world. When the call to murder comes, he realizes that he has lost the will to destroy; rather than kill the anarchist's chosen victim, he kills himself.

Nakedly summarized this way, the plot of the *Princess* seems grossly melodramatic, a subject for a writer of sensational romances, certainly not for a novelist of manners. But James' own account in his Preface to the novel makes it clear why he chose to treat such a theme. Hyacinth is, as James was in another way, an "observant stranger" in London, a figure both "sufficiently thoughtful and sufficiently disinherited" to be finely aware of the world to which he could not belong. And it is his perceptions which interested James, not the possibilities for melodramatic action.

Nevertheless, the novel presented James with some peculiarly difficult problems: neither anarchy nor poverty was indigenous to James' personal world, and he confessed, while writing the book, that he had never found himself "engaged in a novel in which, after I had begun to write and send off my manuscript, the details had remained so vague." He dealt with the problem partly by adopting Zola's method—by visiting Millbank Prison with a notebook, and by keeping a list of "Phrases of the People." But a more fundamental, and more Jamesian, solution was to focus not on details of environment, but on states of consciousness—on "our apprehension and our measure of what happens to us as social creatures." *The Princess* is above all Hyacinth's apprehensions of isolation, resentment, bewilderment, and, finally, of beauty; his measure of what has happened to him is expressed in his death.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The character of Hyacinth is the most striking, because the most unlikely achievement of this fine novel; but it has other excellences as well. James' creation and control of setting shows that he had profitably read his Dickens. His London has the same thick, crepuscular atmosphere, the same dingy mystery that Dickens at his best could create. And, though action is not the focus of the novel, the narrative is, as James might say, admirably composed, and should serve to remind us of a point which we may sometimes forget in our admiration of James' exquisite sensibility—that he was extremely skillful when it came to constructing a taut, suspenseful plot.

The edition of *The Princess* considered here comprises the fifth and sixth volumes of the "new" New York Edition, now in process of publication by Scribner's, for the first time since James put his revised and prefaced works through the presses in 1907-8. The story of the original New York edition is a rather confused one, which has some relevance to one's judgment of the new one.

Mr. Edel, in his bibliography of James' writings, argues that James himself decided on the number of volumes in the edition, and on the exclusions. James' letters, on the other hand, suggest that the decision was Scribners,' and that he was not entirely happy about it. "As for the Edition itself," he wrote to Howells, "it has racked me a little that I've had to leave out so many things that would have helped to make for rather a more vivid completeness. I don't at all regret the things, pretty numerous, that I've omitted from deep-seated preference and design; but I do a little those that are crowded out by want of space and by the rigour of the 23 vols., and 23 only, which were the condition of my being able to arrange the matter with Scribners at all."

James particularly regretted the absence of *The Bostonians*. Apparently he had meant to revise it for eventual inclusion, but was dissuaded from doing so by the commercial failure of the venture, and agreed to let "my poor old rather truncated edition" stand as it was. There were 24 volumes in the original set; two unfinished novels, *The Ivory Tower* and *The Sense of the Past*, were added after James' death.

The critical question now is whether either the commercial necessities of 1907-18, or James' own judgment, should continue to determine the contents of what will obviously be the standard edition of James' fiction for many years to come. Great writers deserve to be known by *all* their works, not simply by their best; and a publisher who offers a "Collected Edition" surely assumes a responsibility for making that edition complete. Certainly *The Bostonians* and *Washington Square* merit places among James' collected works; and indeed one might argue that the other novels—*Watch and Ward, The Europeans, Confidence, The Other House*, and *Outcry*—deserve attention, too. After all, every set of Hardy includes *Desperate Remedies*, and Dickens editions don't ignore *Hard Times*.

IT IS NOT only on the point of inclusiveness that Scribners is open to criticism. The dust-jacket copy announces complacently that "no effort has been spared to make the *new* New York edition even more handsome than the original." But alas, this is not at all the case—a good deal has been spared.

The pages, for example, have not been re-set. The photographs by Alvin Langdon Coburn which James helped select as frontispieces have been left out. The title page device—Brooklyn Bridge with a ship passing—has been eliminated. And the old binding, a rich but scrupulously unostentatious plum-colored cloth with gilt lettering, has been replaced by a combination of black, blue and gold that James would surely have considered an improper costume for a gentleman's works.

Some of these are not serious problems. The un-reset pages, for example, will not really matter until volume XXII, the second volume of *The Ambassadors*, where the New York Edition has a chapter out of correct order, and the title-page device matters only as an indication of the general niggardliness of the new edition. The frontispieces *do* matter; they are an essential part of the set as James planned it, and they are beautiful in themselves. To assert that a new edition without them is "even more handsome" is disingenuous, and shows a cynical disregard for the prospective purchaser who will, after all, have invested $156 in his set before he is through.

If the spirit of the Master walks these days, he must take only a qualified satisfaction in the state of his monument. About Mr. Edel he could scarcely complain, unless he objected, as he well might, to the whole idea of chronicling a quiet life. But the new edition he would find, I'm afraid, even poorer, even more truncated, than the one he put together fifty years ago.

The Bather

(After Cezanne)

He stands
in blue. In blue
poised, inblue, limbs
angularized, he is the
contemplation of the water
—My hand is placed upon my hip
I am a young god
and the water is a blue myth
through which
I attain my godliness.
The water waits—
I stand in miracle upon sand.
(Picasso is staring at me).

NICHOLAS ARCOMANO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STAGE

Here We Go Round the Albee Bush

BECAUSE *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?* is copyrighted, the title of Edward Albee's first full-length play is sung by its characters to the tune of *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush,* thereby establishing a pattern for the evening's procedures and the public discussion that this unsettling work has provoked. Nearly everything is a substitution or an imposture: a folk melody when Mr. Albee would clearly have preferred a tinny contemporary one; an enormous three-act play whose conception rattles around in the space; experiment clothed in conventional attire so as to be allowed to live; on our part, the acceptance, as an imaginative breakthrough, of the play's intentions instead of its accomplishment, or its out-of-hand rejection on grounds having more to do with decorum than esthetics.

I accuse Albee of nothing. He is not a confidence-man, and if some people have given him theirs it is because there is nowhere else to put it. He is the American stage's young master *faute de mieux.* He makes us feel alive and of our time, he will not let us get away with our habitual evasions and behavior. He is in fact a transcriber of those evasions and that behavior, everything he has written, culminating in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" being less a construction of new vision than a series of split-level suburban houses in which we can see ourselves the way the neighbors only speculate. He makes Lillian Hellman seem like the recording secretary of a garden club.

But he also makes a playwright like Ionesco, from whom he used to borrow certain materials, appear more than ever a model of fulness, unity, zest and staying-power. For "Virginia Woolf," though the most interesting play of the season, a work of many compelling virtues, high seriousness and enormous verbal éclat, is an exemplary failure, a fascinating demonstration of the difficulties American playwrights face in trying to cope with all our sundered realities: the split between commerce and art, between tradition and the single voice, between surface and substance and between those aspects of the imagination we identify as form and content.

Hebbel wrote that content presents the task and form the solution. From the moment the curtain goes up on "Virginia Woolf" and we hear Albee's central characters—a history professor at a New England college and his wife, the daughter of the school's president—tell one another that "You make me puke," and "I'm six years younger than you, always have been and always will be," and "If you existed, I'd divorce you," we are aware that there is going to be a struggle on a more consuming level than that of personal antagonism. For the ferocity of Albee's domestic scene, the feral quality of his naturalism, isn't going to be satisfied with a conventional theatrical destiny—there is going to be a mighty conflict between a dramatic task and its elusive solution.

The evening grows more and more violent. The love-hate relationship of the couple fills the stage with wounds, glancing blows, destructions of confidence and of attitudinal clichés, revulsions, weaponless and unbearable intimidations, bitter exaltations and hopeless embraces. The wife despises the husband for his lack of *cojones,* his inability to step into her father's shoes; he is revolted by her promiscuity and her intolerable sexual pressure. Another couple arrives, a young All-American biology instructor and his inane, ethereal wife, and they begin to function as audience for and participants in the marital horror story.

There is nothing "absurd," about this play. Albee has largely abandoned the specific parodic elements and dragooned whimsy of "The Sand Box" and "The American Dream" and the obliquities of "The Zoo Story" and has, if anything, returned to "The Death of Bessie Smith" for savage inspiration and neurotic prototypes. But he has advanced from that problem play. Here the action is more inward and the rhetoric, apart from a few speeches of improbable and high-pitched lamentation, is straightforward, cocky, brutal, knowing and tremendously *au courant* . . . and very funny.

When the wife, played robustly—too robustly, perhaps—by Uta Hagen, stretches out in a chair after an abortive off-stage dalliance with the visiting biologist and huskily announces "I'm the earth mother . . . and you're all flops," we are with Mr. Albee at his insider's best. And when the husband, whom Arthur Hill enacts crisply, but without much force, remarks that "I've been to college like everybody else," we receive confirmation about one source of Albee's appeal. He is the poet of post-Freudian, post-Riesmanian, post-intellectual, wised-up and not-to-be-had, experiential and disenchanted United States of America 1962 Man.

But poets, of course, want to sing, discover new lands of the imagination, be healers. That is Albee's self-imposed "task," and it is his downfall. The pressure in him towards the transcendence of naturalism and psychological notation had previously resulted in the painfully coerced denouement of "The Zoo Story" and the descent into incoherence of "The American Dream." In "Virginia Woolf" the failure is on a larger scale. He has driven into the body of his scrupulously observed *Walpurgisnacht* (the title of Act II; Act I is called *Fun and Games,* Act III *The Exorcism*) a shaft of fantasy designed to point up our sad psychic aridity and fix the relationship between reality and illusion. Its effect is to break the back of the play.

We had been led to believe that the couple have a son in college, much of their mutual recrimination hav-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing concerned his upbringing and present attitude towards them. In Act III we learn—as a *coup de théâtre* —that he is imaginary; unable to have children, they had invented him, keeping him a secret and using his legendary existence as the major bond uniting them in their enmity and need. But when the wife mentions him to the visitors, she breaks their pact and the husband decides to kill him off, announcing his death in an accident and thereby ending the reign of illusion. The play ends with the wife sorrowfully accepting the necessity to live without myths, while whispering that she remains "afraid of Virginia Woolf," afraid, presumably, of life, art and truth.

There is something doubly wrong with this. Structurally, it leaves the play in division from itself, the psychological realism separated by a gulf from the metaphysical data, just as in "The American Dream" the parody and fantasy lay gasping out of each other's reach. But more than this there is the question of vision, of dramatic truth and rightness, of the proper means to an end, in short, of a "task" and its solution. What Albee has done is to smuggle in an element alien to his physical procedure, asking it to carry the burden of revelation he cannot distill from his mere observation of behavior. He wants to say something profound about the human condition, and he ends, like O'Neill in "The Iceman Cometh," offering a cliché about illusions.

The sharpest psychological observation will no longer communicate the kind of truth we need and that Albee, with acute but limited sensibility, keeps trying for. As so many developments in art have demonstrated, the psyche is only one element among others and needs to be *located,* tested against other realities, and not simply described. Naturalism gives us nothing but our reflections. However painful, bold and accurate they are, as in "Virginia Woolf," they are not enough, we are not changed by them, as we are not ultimately changed by this play. The paradox is that human reality can best be apprehended today by indirection, by "inhuman" methods, which means a step beyond the literal, the behavioral, the natural. Our condition is extreme; old measures won't work, but neither will new half-measures, half-dramas such as Albee continues to produce.
(At the Billy Rose) RICHARD GILMAN

THE SCREEN

Down the Arches of the Years

PAR LAGERKVIST, the Nobel Prize-winning Swedish author, has described himself as "a religious atheist, a believer without belief." Well, if a religious atheist could write a novel as penetrating and thoughtfully disturbing as *Barabbas,* then perhaps what we need are more religious atheists. This sparse, deceptively-simple book describes the agonies and sufferings of Barabbas after he is freed by Pilate when the crowd cries, "Not This Man, but Barabbas," and he journeys on his lifelong search for the answers to why This Man died for him and in his stead. Lagerkvist has written a soul-searching story about an unbeliever who misunderstands many things as he witnesses the cruel and inhuman practices of the first century, but Barabbas wants to believe, wants to pray. He cannot until the very end, when he too is on a cross and delivers up his soul.

The film, made in Italy by Dino De Laurentiis from this extraordinary novel, is as extraordinary as the novel. It is an elaborate religious spectacle that is genuinely religious. Although the script, well written by Christopher Fry, has made some changes in expanding the original story, it has caught well its main theme—that of a man fleeing from the Hound of Heaven.

The objection has been made by some critics, both in England where the picture opened last Spring and in the United States when it started on a two-a-day basis last month, that the movie is too violent and shows too explicitly the details of man's inhumanity to man. Actually the violence and cruelty portrayed in "Barabbas" are legitimate portraits of the brutality and callous attitudes that reflect the times. Some of the harsh spectacular scenes stem right from Lagerkvist's novel: the Crucifixion at Golgotha (beautifully photographed during an eclipse), the brutish treatment accorded Barabbas and his friend Sahak when they were harnessed like animals to a plough, the burning of Rome, and the crucifixion of Barabbas and hundreds of Christians on a hillside outside of Rome. Some of the most spectacular and violent scenes come not from Lagerkvist but from producer De Laurentiis: the horrors of the sulphur mines in Sicily and the bloody viciousness of the gladiator school and the combats in the arena. But these scenes are not thrown in for violence's sake; they further explain Barabbas, the inhuman period, the contrasting nobility of the first Christians, and especially the uncertainties of this man who "fled Him, down the nights and down the days."

Anthony Quinn is excellent in the important lead role, portraying Barabbas as a perplexed clod who doesn't understand what life is all about, but who is determined to survive. Disturbed by the remembrance of the Man who died in his place, the Man's doctrine: "Love one another," the steadfast loyalty of his Christian friend Sahak who dies for his faith, and the awe-inspiring catacombs where he becomes indeed lost and confused as in labyrinthine ways, Quinn's Barabbas changes. He never reaches understanding, but he decides to throw his lot in with the Christians and, thinking they are setting fire to Rome, he goes berserk with a lighted torch, only to be imprisoned in the end with the guiltless martyrs. At the movie's finale, the dolt on his cross

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is still searching—but he has done his best and is sincere: "I give myself up . . . into your keeping. It is Barabbas."

Seldom does a spectacular film follow through with its religious themes. "Barabbas" does. Perhaps it would have been a better film if it had toned down some of its extreme physical assaults, especially in the arena where the bloody games (in the otherwise handsome Technicolor and Technirama screen) are hard to take. And I wish director Richard Fleischer could have given more depth to some of the characters surrounding the assassin-thief as he wanders through the years. Except for Vittorio Gassman, outstanding as Sahak, the believer who tries to help Barabbas and refuses to give up his beliefs, and Harry Andrews who is quite moving as St. Peter, most of the cast are just symbols who appear in a few scenes. Hamming up his role almost to the point of absurdity, Jack Palance makes the captain of the gladiators a symbol of sadistic cruelty. But perhaps that character too is part of the torment through which Barabbas and other men must go in their flight from the Hound. There are many impressive scenes in De Laurentiis' production but none more impressive than the finale with its rows and rows of crosses and the close-up of the exhausted assassin-thief humbly saying, "It is Barabbas."

AGAIN PLAYING an uneducated clod and again playing the role very well, Anthony Quinn is the prizefighter whose hymn of repose is sung—or rather moaned—in "Requiem for a Heavyweight." The answer he's looking for this time is what he should do next now that he's been told he's finished after seventeen years in the ring. Producer David Susskind has made Rod Sterling's grim TV play into a somewhat expanded although equally grim movie. Its opening scene, in which you are the camera and Quinn getting your last beating, is the best. But the whole film, under Ralph Nelson's direction, is so well acted and gripping that you, physically beaten at the beginning and then mentally and spiritually plastered again and again, have to stay with the grisly proceedings right to the end.

Quinn does have at least two people on his side: his trainer (magnificently played by Mickey Rooney) who knows the private hell this poor, dumb, battered guy is going through; and an employment counselor (Julie Harris) who understands the man, really cares what happens to him and tries to find him a job that will help him retain some sense of dignity. Miss Harris seems a little ladylike to be quite so enthusiastic about a down-and-outer who never got beyond the sixth grade, but she's intensely sincere in the role and adds the film's one gracious touch.

The cards, however, and Quinn's double-dealing manager are stacked against the finished fighter. Jackie Gleason plays this role so convincingly, he's frightening—and frightened. Pursued as he is by some tough gamblers to whom he owes money, Gleason snatches Quinn from a new start offered by the solicitous Miss Harris, and pushes him into a series of degrading wrestling matches. And Quinn, the decent guy that he is, and feeling sorry for quaking Gleason, takes the cheesy wrestling job—dressed as an Indian no less. "Requiem" is a powerful film and absorbing; and like "Barabbas" it deplores man's inhumanity to man. Unlike "Barabbas," however, it ends on a downbeat and suggests no answer. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

CORRESPONDENCE

"The Race Toward Ugliness"

Queens Village, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Murray Polner's "The Race Toward Total Ugliness" [Sept. 21] touched briefly but cogently on a matter of utmost importance to me as a woman, housewife and mother: art, beauty and reality. His article pertains mainly to "organized art" as manifested in the total efforts of architect, builder, and banker, and the ugliness such collaboration has produced in our time. In fact it is the tyranny of the experts, made possible by the widespread abdication of individual, personal expression on the lay level, that has made possible the almost complete destruction of beauty in our lives today.

Bleak as have been the results of unchecked expertise in its civic manifestations, its effects on the domestic arts have been even more damaging. It is painful to see the rigidity with which some women—not all—approach the color scheme in a bedroom or the placement of furniture in a living room. This in their own homes, financed with their own money, and yet final decisions defer to Michael Greer, A.I.D., perhaps who cannot fairly be expected to know the day-to-day existence of an individual housewife. Several months ago on a TV answering service, a woman called to ask the art critic for the day if she could hang some particular object on her wall. True artist and honest man that he was, he replied: "You can hang anything you like on your wall."

This is not a plea for ignorance of fundamental principles of form, color, composition, etc. It is a lamentation that with all this knowledge readily available today, the average housewife so seldom uses it to *create her own beauty.* I returned several weeks ago from Pennsylvania Dutch country where housewives still paint vari-colored tulips on white front doors. They love their gardens, particularly tulips, and what could be more natural and spontaneous than to reproduce for year-round satisfaction what they so love in the spring.

There's a good deal of fun in this kind of natural

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE EDITOR OF *THE PILOT* BRILLIANTLY EXPLORES

The Catholic Church in a Changing America

By Monsignor FRANCIS J. LALLY

Important changes are taking place in the United States in politics, education, integration and other social fields. In this forthright book, Monsignor Lally discusses these changes — including the election of America's first Catholic President — and tells how the Church is meeting the challenges they present. In doing so, he clears a path to greater understanding of the Church's role in America. $3.75 at all bookstores.

LITTLE, BROWN • BOSTON

Donda's Starving Baby.... Age Two, Weight Ten Pounds!

Suppose YOU were this mother in Africa, watching helpless as slow starvation kept killing the silent child in your arms.

And suppose in YOUR despair there was no place but the mission dispensary seven miles away for you to carry him to plead for help.

And suppose the kind missionaries there, who hadn't ever seen you before, lovingly took YOUR dying child as their own and saved his tiny life with their medicines and salves, vitamins and baby foods.

Then wouldn't YOU listen to the Sisters, and wouldn't YOU easily understand what they told you of the charity of Christians and the mercy of Christ and the love of God?

That's how medical care helps missionaries to reach souls in the foreign missions.

Please help. Send any offering you can, to

Catholic Medical Mission Board

Dept. C, 8 W. 17th St., New York 11, N.Y.

home art, and indeed I guess my main objection to the professional decorators is that they've almost succeeded in taking all the fun out of home art. The color of the living room walls becomes a grim, serious decision in their hands, and well it might considering what it will cost. Whereas if the housewife decides on her own color, and mixes it herself, it would all be a happy experiment. And if she doesn't like the color by next year, she can easily and cheaply change it. Thus we might retain the elements of joy and surprise of which all true art consists.

JEANNE MCQUADE

"The Narcotics Problem"

Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS: I am shocked at the chemical illiteracy in your editorial on the narcotics problem [Oct. 12]. You give the impression that the poppy "yields" heroin. This is not really true. The poppy yields opium, if it is the right type. Opium is a chemical mixture which smoked in relatively moderate quantities is not habit forming and, if anything, tends to quiet the sex drive and keep weight down. Having spent some nights in opium parlors in Bangkok, I know how thin even teen-age opium-smokers can become. Opium is not vicious.

Heroin, isolated from the mixture (or compound) called opium by means of glacial Acetic Acid, is a highly dangerous alkaloid which is not smoked but is pinched into the nostrils, or "shot" into the main arteries of the body. After a few doses of heroin, the taker becomes a hopeless victim enslaved by the horror of "withdrawal symptoms." A man who sells opium, as in Thailand, peddles sweet dreams and quiet. The man who peddles heroin is a murderer not only of bodies but of spirits.

And why mention Turkey? They only sell opium and marijuana. Red China is dumping heroin in the U.S. year by year. And since Harry Anslinger was sent to pasture one never even reads about it in the newspapers. Our enemy in the drug world can be summarized briefly: Red China and Red Heroin.

RICHARD L. G. DEVERALL

APPEALS for orphans: Sister Marie-Celine of Theological College, opposite Mount Mary Church, Bandra, Bombay 50, India, needs funds for building. "We cannot occupy this temporary habitation for long." Father P. Bianchi, S.D.B., needs funds and clothing for destitute sons of the Naga headhunters. Gifts may be sent c/o Salesian Missions, 148 Main St., New Rochelle, N.Y., or directly to Father Bianchi at Nirmalabas, Imphal, Manipur, India (India Airmail: 25¢).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Life in Neither-Heaven-Nor-Hell Land

An Answer From Limbo. By Brian Moore. Atlantic, Little-Brown. $5.

by Alice Ellen Mayhew

THE LESSON in psychological dissection will now begin. In Brian Moore's first novel, *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne,* a middle-aged Belfast spinster sees her last of love's promise. *The Feast of Lupercal* follows, a stiffer and more dismal vision, more intellectual but lacking the first book's poignancy and tragedy; the 37-year-old schoolmaster hero is guilty and fearful, his integrity and grit are in question. *The Luck of Ginger Coffey,* the third of Mr. Moore's mordant visions, is surprisingly sentimental. The realism yields to surrealistic slices and inner monologues, a Joycean device used well, to describe another Moore non-hero, pathetic as well as obnoxious, a man whose inadequacy is itself his destiny. Always on the verge of sudden tears and riotous laughter, the book comes to too good an end and loses strength.

Moore's latest book *An Answer From Limbo,* is both more intellectual and more indulgent than his previous novels. The hero still lives in a neither-Heaven-nor-Hell land, no heroics and no flat-out vice, but this time he's chasing after a maddening obsession, success as a writer —*ad majoram Brendan gloriam,* as he puts it. Mr. Moore makes his hero an *arriviste* author but he could be any kind of intriguer. Using and sometimes destroying those around him, he is really challenging the past doubters: his mocking schoolfellows who had tried to cool his ambitions with a bath in the fountain; his puritanical and contemptuous father who is long dead; a challenging comrade, no longer with him; his pseudo-intellectual, literary-fringe New York friends whom he detests; his wife whose confidence strains occasionally; and his mother, who thought his adolescent desire to write was just a phase. He brings her over from Ireland to mind his children while his wife goes to work and he finishes his novel.

Will it be good? A success? Brendan's literary destiny is now his whole life; there is no *man* behind *writer.* If the writer fails, the man is no longer even apparently present. "What spectacle is more degrading than these Village Rimbauds, covered with the vomit of sickly pastiche, crying out their genius and their purity from mouths filled with rotten teeth? Am I now to be one of them?"

The truth is that his concept of hell is a hell *manqué,* limbo, the borderland, oblivion. It is the worst he can imagine. Several times this image is evoked. Once by the mother about the unbaptized children of her son, a limbo out of the sight of God for eternity. Another time by Brendan about the strange apartment where his mother dies a hard, abandoned death—limbo, the place of the forgotten. But the real limbo is the place where Brendan and his wife live, not New York of course, but in a pathos within themselves.

Mr. Moore writes circles around his characters and readers alike. In fact, he writes excessively well. This takes your mind off the wholly untenable secondary characters, for one thing. And for another, it makes forgivable the wife's sexual involvement with an officemate, a vulgar knock-em-down, drag-em-out Lothario whom all of Moore's boisterous preparation of the wife's weaknesses can not save from ridiculousness.

For all Moore's seriousness and brilliant realism, I find this book's dilemma overly simplified, too explicable. The counterpoints of conflict—the triangle of Brendan obsessed by the outer devil of success and Art, the wife obsessed by an urge for immolation, the mother cringing from these obsessions but with her own past guilts—are too well planned. Their eventual "tragedies" are inexorable and, for that reason, there is surprisingly little drama. The reader's role is simply to wait out the inevitable.

Vital ST MARTIN'S books for reading and reference

•

WE DISSENT

Edited by Hoke Norris

A timely, provocative book of 13 articles by prominent Southerners who disagree on some points but who are emphatic in their opposition to the rabid segregationists and their works. The contributors are Wilma Dykeman, James Stokely, Ralph McGill, Kathleen Keen Sinnett, Thomas D. Clark, Lenoir Chambers, Jonathan Daniels, Hodding Carter III, LeRoy Collins, Francis Pickens Miller, James McBride Dabbs, Borden Deal, Paul Green, and Hoke Norris. $4.95

SOMETHING HUMAN

by Mohamed Mehdevi

The thoughtful—and sometimes disturbing—personal account of a young Iranian's experiences in America. Whether he praises our high standard of living and the drive and energy of the pioneer spirit, or criticizes the superficiality of our education, his crisp style and keen eye make his book sparkling reading. Portions of it appeared in *The New Yorker.* "Vivid and intelligent. . . . He is a candid writer."—*Punch* $4.50

THE SOVIET HIGH COMMAND

A Military-Political History 1918-1941 by John Erickson

"This authoritative history . . . contributes powerfully to an understanding of what Khrushchev has called Stalin's 'faulty methods of directing the nation and the Party'. . . . A substantial, heavily annotated and readable work of considerable insight."
—A. H. Lovell, *Book-of-the-Month Club News*
Maps $15.00

THE STATESMAN'S YEARBOOK, 1962-63

Edited by S. H. Steinberg

The indispensable one-volume encyclopedia of essential facts on every country in the world including those behind the Iron Curtain. Information on national and international affairs, governments, constitutions, officials, exports, and much other data of permanent importance. 1,720 pages $9.50

THE ANNUAL REGISTER OF WORLD EVENTS

A review of the year 1961. Surveys historical events, country by country. Also developments in science and economics, religion and law, literature and the arts. *Index, map* $25.00

At your bookstore or from
ST MARTIN'S
New York 10, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Poetic and Anti-Poetic Imagery

By the Waters of Manhattan. By Charles Reznikoff. New Directions—San Francisco Review. $1.50.
The Materials. By George Oppen. New Directions—San Francisco Review. $1.25.

by Richard Lanham

CHARLES REZNIKOFF could well be an Imagist poet, as C. P. Snow claims in his introduction to Mr. Reznikoff's book. His poems sit solidly on the page with a photographic clarity. In fact, much of this selection is like an album of the (Jewish) life Mr. Reznikoff has felt and seen.

Here is Mr. Reznikoff at his best: "Followed by his lodge, shabby men stumbling over the cobblestones,/ and his children, faces red and ugly with tears, eyes and eyelids red,/ in the black coffin in the black hearse the old man."

But passages such as this are the exception rather than the rule. Too often, Mr. Reznikoff is disturbingly pretty, in a chinese-girlish way: "About an excavation/a flock of bright red lanterns/has settled." And far too often, the main intention of these poems is, in one way or another, to beg for compassion for the suffering of the Jews.

Now certainly nothing is wrong with this: unquestionably, pain as a result of anti-semitism cries out for compassion. But the plea in Mr. Reznikoff's verse is so sentimental that it does neither the cause nor his poetry any good: "We Jews are as the dew/on every blade of grass,/ trodden under foot today/and here tomorrow morning." Ideally, this selection should be cut by two-thirds. As it stands, with its prettiness and sentimentality, it only rarely rises above the level of an accomplished amateurism.

In comparison with Mr. Reznikoff's, the poetry of George Oppen seems almost bone-dry. His most usual emotion is awe: awe of the definiteness of the past: ". . . But how imagine it/. . . streets boarded and vacant where no time will hatch/Now chairs and walls . . ." unbelieving awe of his own marks of time: "an aging man/The knuckles of my hand/So jointed! I am this?" But Mr. Oppen's subjects and feelings are not so easily limited. He has metaphysical concerns (e.g., man's emptiness and need to gain definition in relation to the things of the world) and he has an enviable lyric sense: "Sparrow in the cobbled street,/Little sparrow round and sweet,/Chaucer's bird—"

The style of *The Materials* is a mixture of "anti-poetic" images and choppy rhythms, smoothing out in a form that is seemingly a string of syllogisms, but is actually a series of associations faultlessly joined together. The one disturbance, in the style and in the poetry at large, is the use of "altho" for "although," "thru" for "through," etc. Mr. Oppen is just too serious and too competent for that sort of thing.

A Search for a Self in a Strange Country

Something Human. By Mohamed Mehdevi. St. Martin's Press. $4.50.

by John P. Sisk

BECAUSE contrasts define, one of the best ways to understand one's own country is to travel abroad. Or, as Aldous Huxley puts it in a comparison of America and Europe, "Passing from a liquid into a windy world, the most unscientifically minded of fish is suddenly enabled to criticize and comprehend the water which, as an inhabitant, it had ignored." But if the natives of that windy world are forced to re-evaluate themselves in the stranger's perspective, they become part of a defining process. Thus Americans, who never tire of trying to define themselves (even though they are easily upset by unexpected definitions), have always been eager readers of critical travelogues written by foreign visitors.

Something Human, Mohamed Mehdevi's account of his first six years in this country, is, at least on the surface, such a travelogue. It begins with the young Persian's nervous arrival in a Florida University where he plans to spend nine months before returning to school in Vienna. However, after an unsatisfactory academic year he finds himself cut off from funds and out of necessity forced to discover the freedom of the open road. He beats his way across the continent to Los Angeles, exists precariously there on a variety of menial jobs, then beats his way to New York.

AN INTRODUCTION TO
worldview
A JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Your evaluation of world events depends altogether on where you stand. However keen your vision, it can be refracted out of focus by special pleas, by uncertain data, by the prevailing fashions in over-simplification, by the mere rush of conflicting ideas.

As a journal of religion and international affairs, **worldview** chooses the firm, high ground of the Judaeo Christian tradition for its perspective on current history. This tradition, which has done so much for the civilization of man, is especially relevant today when immense problems call for the best in our heritage.

You are invited to share this vantage point by becoming a regular reader of **worldview.** The subscription price is only $2 a year. But if you subscribe for two years ($4), you will also receive a free copy of **The Moral Dilemma of Nuclear Weapons,** a collection of essays by such **worldview** contributors as John Courtney Murray, S.J., Walter Millis, John C. Bennett, Steven S. Schwarzchild, Paul Ramsey, John Cogley, Ernest W. Lefever, and Julian N. Hartt.

We are confident your regular encounter with **worldview** will help you refine your perspective of world events which so urgently depend for resolution on the thought and action of discerning men everywhere. Just send us your name and address today with your order for a one or two year subscription. If you wish, we'll gladly bill you later.

worldview
170-C EAST 64th ST. / NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

Christmas Cards
Circular available
Berliner & McGinnis
Nevada City, California

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ART CENTER
formerly Beuron Art
Distinctive Art for Church and School. Unusual Gifts. Wood Carvings. Ceramic. Enamels.
1053 Lexington Ave., N.Y. 21, N.Y., BU 8-8186

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There, after a series of less menial jobs, he ends up as an unhappy, lonely, but well-paid employee of an import-export firm.

Looked at simply as a travelogue Mr. Mehdevi's book, parts of which appeared originally in *The New Yorker*, is well-written, often witty, often amusing and occasionally frightening. His experience with American higher education, though amusingly related, is hardly typical since the university he attended was a strange place indeed by any standards; and his verdict on American women, the pursuit of whom seems to have taken up a good deal of his time, will probably be too familiar to be interesting to most of his American readers (who may remember Malcolm Muggeridge rendering substantially the same verdict in a recent issue of *Esquire*). But generally what Mr. Mehdevi has to say about the Dale Carnegie strain in the American character, the American's innocence of history, his commitment to process, his materialism, and his spiritual impoverishment in a land of inconceivable abundance is all sound enough.

Nevertheless, if one considers Mr. Mehdevi's book simply as a criticism of America, it has little to add to what other observers, domestic as well as foreign, have already said many times. It is more profitable to look at it as the record of a sensitive, intelligent but bewildered young man's search for himself in a strange country. In fact, it repeats the experience of the protagonist in a familiar kind of American confessional novel. In its selection of revealing episodes and its use of flashbacks it is even written like a novel. Nothing is more American in it than Mehdevi's discovery of all the false promises of America, including that most painful of all discoveries that sex in America is a false promise. So he learns finally that he had been "sullied and punished for having sought too often in embraces a refuge from loneliness rather than a true consummation; for having made my body serve needs other than its own." American too is his loneliness in America, his thematic complaint that something human is missing in the world around him, and his eventual realization that having embarked on a picaresque voyage of discovery, he can't go home again.

The book ends with Mehdevi's delivery of a passionate and improbably long complaint to a tipsy sales executive. It is a good enough way to end, since the book is more about its author than about America. But Mr. Mehdevi remained here for several years after the events related in his book, and one wonders to what extent he came to see that America had been for him, as it has for so many others of his temperament, the best possible, if always precarious, school of experience.

REVIEWERS

Alice Ellen Mayhew, a regular contributor, is on the staff of a well-known New York publishing house.

Richard Lanham, making his first appearance in these pages, has contributed articles to the *Village Voice* and *Jubilee* magazine.

John P. Sisk, a frequent contributor, is on the faculty of Gonzaga University, Spokane.

RAMPARTS

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC JOURNAL

published and edited by Catholic laymen

ACCLAIMED

"... *Ramparts* will be a valuable addition to the growing number of magazines in America which concentrate on more worthwhile goals than huge circulations."
—PROVIDENCE EVENING BULLETIN

"Highly recommended."
—LIBRARY JOURNAL

CONTRIBUTORS

Francois Mauriac
Conrad Aiken
Djuna Barnes
Martin Turnell
Gabriel Marcel
Leslie A. Fiedler
John Berryman
Wallace Fowlie

PORTRAITS & PERSONALITIES

John Howard Griffin
Salvador Dali
Aubrey Beardsley
Wyndham Lewis

SYMPOSIA

Tennessee Williams
J. D. Salinger
Eugene O'Neill
William Faulkner

REVALUATIONS

Ford Madox Ford
George Santayana
Hart Crane
Edmund Wilson

AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS GIFT

RAMPARTS is published in January, March, May, September and November.

RAMPARTS • 1178 Chestnut St. • Menlo Park, Calif.

Please enter my subscription immediately.

☐ 1 year ($8.50) ☐ 2 years ($16) ☐ 3 years ($23) ☐ 4 years ($29)

☐ Payment enclosed. ☐ Bill me.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hirshhorn: The Collector's Art

THE JOSEPH H. Hirshhorn Collection of modern sculpture could so very easily have been a little of everything, or lots of the most famous sculptors only: instead it is both choice and comprehensive. This stupendous collection (Hollywood epithets come to mind only because for once the occasion warrants it) avoids the pitfalls of large collections and presents 444 works displayed with unobtrusive ingenuity at the Guggenheim Museum in N.Y., a unique and personal treasure. The amazing scope of this group of acquisitions made over the past thirty years by the gold-and-uranium multi-millionaire seems matched by the personal taste, fervor and roving curiosity behind it.

The direction of the collector's enthusiasm seems to be toward sculptural forms that embody an emotional expressiveness. This quality is obvious in the works by Rodin (including the monumental *Burghers of Calais,* happily placed in a corner of the museum's small garden), Daumier, the Expressionists (Barlach, Lembruch, etc.), the Fantasists (Richier, Ernst, Miro) and in that of a large number of sculptor-painters that overflow the section allotted them at the exhibit to include artists as diverse as Eakins and Matisse. The sculptor-painters seem, perhaps because of a sort of double-vision, to emphasize this common denominator in their art. Rosso is the most explicit example, but Degas and Picasso in their intensely different ways are also imbued with this vital expressiveness.

That Manzú and Marini, two of Mr. Hirshhorn's favorite sculptors, are heavily endowed with this expressive quality, is quite clear; the work of Giacometti is certainly characterized by it. Its presence in the work of Henry Moore, central to the collection and to the collector (there are 27 important works exhibited at the Guggenheim), is deeply absorbed in the mystery of his famous "archetypal" forms. The quality is nonetheless a key, I believe, to the deeply moving effect of his myth-like creations—in particular those chosen by this collector. The stately and piteous *King and Queen,* the rather a-typical *Falling Warrior,* the eloquent semi-abstract green bronze *Interior-Exterior Reclining Figure*—all are imbued with an emotional expressiveness that is sunk in the plastic form like an inherent design.

The affinity of the collector for the emotionally expressive in sculptural forms is notable in his choice of Brancusi, Arp and abstract or constructivist works. Brancusi's search for "essences" is here represented for instance by the almost tender *Sleeping Muse,* an egg-head resting on its side. Arp's *Human Lunar Spectral,* a gleaming undulating mysterious mass, and *Torso, Fruit* with its shy, voluptuous curves, are among the most vividly speaking of the artist's metamorphic forms. Barbara Hepworth's wood *Head,* its warped holes barred with strings, is an abstract shape that arouses pity and awe; De Rivera's sinuous revolving *Construction 35* and Calder's *Stabile* (*Le Petit Nez*) carving the air, both express feeling as clearly as any Expressionist could do.

The collector's roving curiosity is so far-flung, and his sympathies so large (as well as his ability to acquire so great) that the bent of his personal enthusiasm performs a tremendously useful function in creating a certain order in a collection that might have so easily been chaotic or didactic. In a way it makes a work of art out of Mr. Hirshhorn's collection.

Even on those occasions, of which there are a few, when an excess of emotional expressiveness appears to have determined a choice, or when a sculptor is all but misrepresented because those of his works which have this expressiveness are chosen rather than those that embody his

A leading French historian—"*with judicious calm and impeccable scholarship*"*—gives an impartial and unflinching account of one of history's most savage massacres, and the passions that caused it.

*MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

St. Bartholomew's Night • Philippe Erlanger

$5.00, now at your bookstore PANTHEON

College of Notre Dame of Maryland

Baltimore 10, Maryland

Conducted by the School Sisters of Notre Dame

Fully Accredited

Program leading to A.B. degree
Arts and Sciences

Teacher Training Pre-Medical

For catalog and further information address the Director of Admissions

Classified

• RATES: 25¢ a word, 12 words minimum. Centered lines: $1.50 a line, 2 lines minimum.
Discounts: 3 times, 5%; 7 times, 10%; 13 times, 15%. Payable with order.

Chesterton and Belloc Books

• CHESTERTON'S and BELLOC'S Books. 200+ titles stocked. Free Catalogue. Andrew Prosser, 3118 N. Keating, Chicago 41, Ill.

Mission Needs

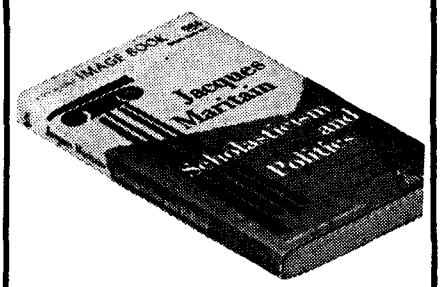
• "MY CATHOLIC FAITH," 100 copies needed. Donations of $3 appreciated. ST. MARY'S MISSION, Above Rocks, Jamaica, W.I.

Get in Touch

• Would *Omar B. Wright, Nicholas Mohr, Eugene Lehman, William F. Sands,* connected with *Sun Herald,* Catholic daily, Kansas City, 1950-51 (or anyone with information on their present whereabouts), please contact Norma Krause Herzfeld, 811 Hyde Rd., Silver Spring, Md.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AN IMAGE PAPERBACK



SCHOLASTICISM AND POLITICS

By Jacques Maritain.

Thought-provoking reflections of the world-famed philosopher on what man is, the basis of his innate dignity, human freedom and the meaning of life. "It is difficult to convey the beauty of this book."—*Commonweal* 95c

At all booksellers

Write for complete list to

DOUBLEDAY IMAGE BOOKS

Dept. 80-D

Garden City, N. Y

Educational

INDIANA

Saint Mary's College Notre Dame

Graduate School of Sacred Theology for Sisters and Laywomen. Distinguished faculty of Religious and Lay Professors. Saint Mary's College, Box 11, Notre Dame, Indiana.

NEW JERSEY

Delbarton School

Morristown, New Jersey. An hour's drive from the George Washington Bridge or Holland Tunnel. A country day and boarding school for boys conducted by Benedictine Monks. Six forms, comprising the 7th and 8th grades and four years of college preparatory courses. Small classes. Thorough guidance department. Complete athletic program. Write for prospectus to the Headmaster.

characteristic temper—even so, the value of the collector's personal taste is immense. This is of course due to the fact that his bent is towards an element that is basic in art, and one that is viable in almost all the best in sculpture. Emotions are perhaps as limitless as the sea, and expressiveness is also. It may well be that, in a sense, only a failure to perceive a certain *kind* of emotional expressiveness would deter such a collector from acquiring every valid work of art under the sun.

Pushed to the wall by such a consideration, one might consider what kinds of expression Mr. Hirshhorn's collection of modern sculpture does *not* celebrate. The works by Maillol chosen for the exhibit perhaps provide a clue to the answer. The sculpture of this early modern master is a robust re-incarnation of the classical ideal, but the pieces by Maillol presented at the Guggenheim are not the typical earth-bound, solid yet ideal masterpieces of the artist that stand apart in their earthly paradise. The bronze *Nymph* (1936-8) has an expression that makes a direct appeal to the spectator and that breaks the usual Maillol spell. *Youth* (1910) and even *Kneeling Nude* (1935) have a disturbing self-conscious air. It would seem to me that the utter reserve and isolation of Maillol's typical works, human as they are, is not congruous with the specific "emotional expressiveness" that pervades the vast variety of this exhibition.

In short, it may be said that this collection does not celebrate the "classical" spirit of order, reserve, and repose. The expression of classical feeling has been (as far as I can see) the only thing left out. Perhaps this may account for the absence of the work of Richard Lippold, for instance, and for the small unemphatic group by Leonard Baskin, otherwise the more surprising since among his many amiable qualities Mr. Hirshhorn counts a predeliction for American contemporary artists.

BETTY KAUFMAN

Schedule for Exhibit, Guggenheim Museum, N.Y., until January 6, 1963.

Looking for Controversy? Try Ave Maria Magazine

Ave Maria, published by the Holy Cross Fathers of Notre Dame, Ind., is a national weekly which manages, every seven days, to do three things:

To stay on top of the news;

To interpret that news from a Catholic viewpoint and insofar as it affects Catholics;

To seek out, rather than to avoid the controversial, providing plenty of space for all sides to argue their points.

The magazine thrives on issues. Some recent ones have been Father Cronin and his critics, William Buckley and his critics, the Bible and segregation, the spiritual problems of teen-agers, fund-raising, and even whether your child should go to camp. In every case I found the issues clear and important, the writing incisive.

Occasionally, too there will be special interest to American Catholics, such as an excellent piece on the distinctive and dynamic quality of midwest Catholicism.

The magazine is a relatively slim one. The advantage of size has been the editorial insistence on brevity — in the news briefs, in the several regular columns, and in the book reviews. What results is not a disappointment that something seems unfinished, but rather an admiration that one can learn a great deal in a short space. Even the pictures and occasional short stories seem to profit by the space limitations for they must make their points vertically, not horizontally; dramatically, not epically.

At 25 cents a copy Ave Maria is a bargain; a clear-cut rival to Time or Newsweek in timeliness, much better written and edited in the bargain, and of particular interest to alert Catholics. (J.G.M.)

reprinted from the LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC

INTRODUCTORY SUBSCRIPTION 40 weeks for only $5

AVE MARIA box 201 Notre Dame, Indiana

Please send for 40 weeks at the special price of $5. (one year $7)

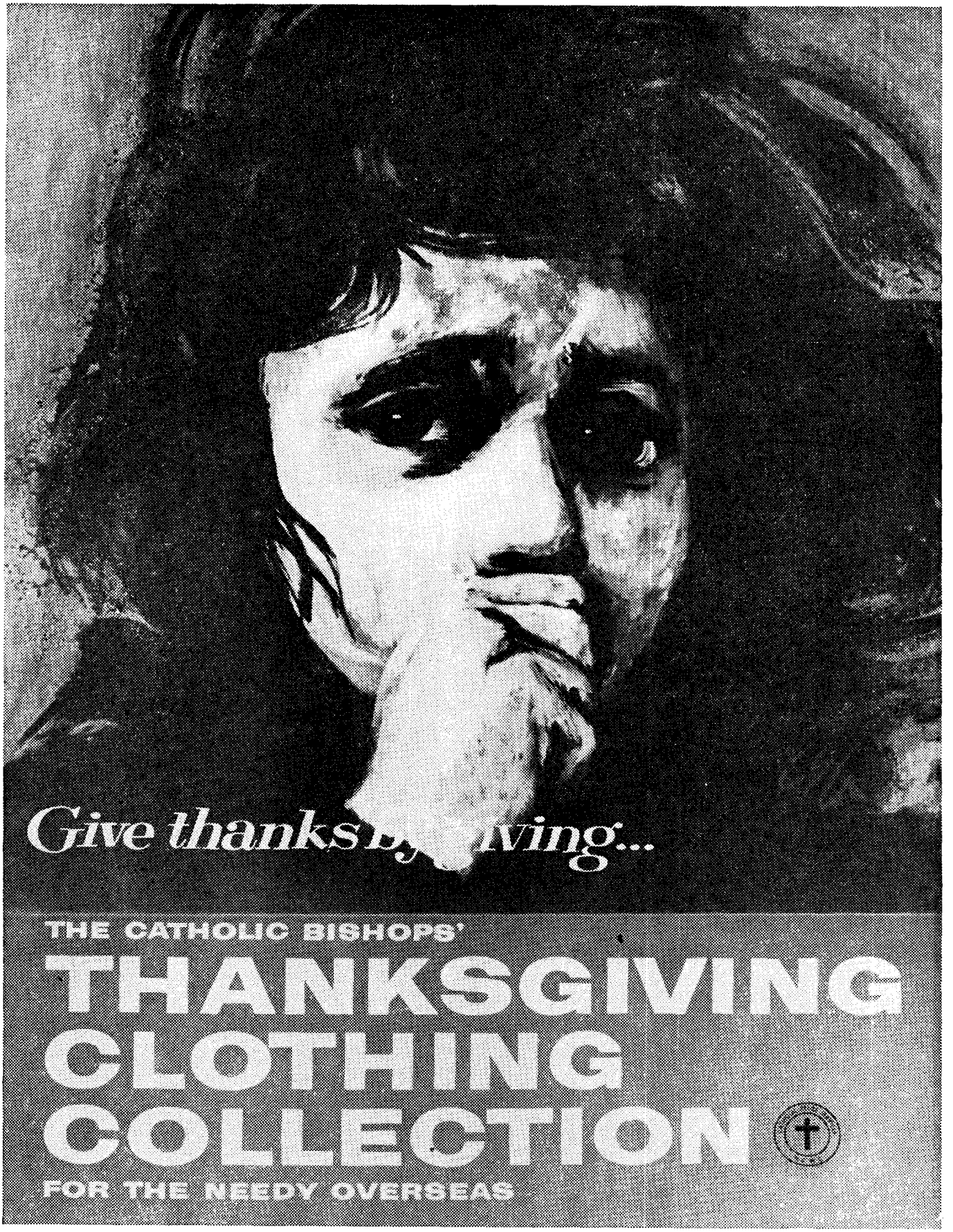
☐ Bill me • Payment enclosed ☐

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... Zone .... State .....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Poster to be displayed in more than 16,500 Catholic churches and schools throughout the United States, appealing for wearable used clothing, shoes, blankets and bedding supplies for the homeless and ill-clothed in other lands.

The nearest Catholic church will gladly and gratefully accept donations which will be promptly shipped for distribution among destitute persons of every race, creed and color by Catholic Relief Services, the overseas aid agency of the American Catholic Bishops, which operates relief and welfare programs in areas of need or distress in 67 countries of the world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED